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Letter dated 8 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to confirm to you that, during the presidency of the Republic of Ghana, a debate on the topic "Women and peace and security: towards a coherent and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)" will be held in the Council on 23 October 2007, chaired by Akwasi Osei-Adjei, M.P., Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ghana.

The Ghana Mission has prepared a concept paper to help guide the discussion on that occasion (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Leslie K. **Christian**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 8 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Women and peace and security: towards a coherent and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

Concept paper

1. In recognition of the vital role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, the Security Council continues to be preoccupied with the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) which was adopted on 31 October 2000. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), world leaders additionally stressed the importance of a coherent and integrated approach to the prevention and settlement of conflicts and reaffirmed their commitment to realization of the objectives in resolution 1325 (2000).

2. Towards this end, the Council has focused considerable attention on such fundamental issues as:

(a) The impact of armed conflict on women and girls;

(b) The full implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law so as to protect the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts, taking into account their special needs;

(c) Incorporating a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, peace negotiations and in Security Council missions;

(d) Creating effective institutional arrangements that would not only guarantee the protection of women and girls but also ensure their full and equal participation in peace processes, including negotiations and decision-making.

3. One of the central objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) is gender mainstreaming in all aspects of peace and security. Its realization, however, calls for deliberate, purposeful and sustained interventions especially on the part of Member States, with the active collaboration and support of the United Nations and other relevant actors. The critical role of Member States in the full and effective implementation of the resolution cannot be overstated and is further underscored by the fact that national ownership is a prerequisite for the success of gender mainstreaming activities over the longer term. National ownership also enhances prospects of mobilizing the support of civil society groups while enhancing the impact of international assistance.

4. Consequently, resolution 1325 (2000) seeks to involve a broad range of stakeholders in gender mainstreaming, including the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies, Member States, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups as well as parties to peace negotiations. The resolution also emphasizes the need for adequate funding through voluntary contributions by Member States to facilitate the required institutional networking both at the national and international level.

5. While women increasingly play an important proactive role as partners in mediating and negotiating peace, in searching for justice, in fostering reconciliation, in supporting disarmament and demobilization, and in rebuilding national institutions, at the national level, the rate and means of implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are far from adequate. Among others, in most countries, there are no mechanisms or systems to ensure accountability for failures in implementation of the resolution. Only a few Member States, mostly developed ones, have elaborated national plans or strategies to implement the resolution. In spite of the progress made in the area of policy reforms, norm setting, and institutional development, a large gap still exists between policy and practice, particularly at the country level, which need to be addressed urgently.

6. Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council has organized annual debates on the subject "Women and peace and security" to advance the aims and purposes of the resolution. Successive debates have sought to review the progress made so far and thereby highlight the challenges to its full and effective implementation. It is to help sustain the momentum and growing commitment towards implementing resolution 1325 (2000) that Ghana has also decided to organize an open debate, during its presidency, on "Women and peace and security", on 23 October 2007, under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ghana, Akwasi Osei-Adjei, M.P.

Scope

7. Given the need for commitment on the part of Member States for the successful implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the debate will focus on how they can effectively meet their obligations as outlined in the resolution, in collaboration with the United Nations system. Among the questions participants may wish to address are:

- How to fully integrate the objectives of resolution 1325 (2000) into existing gender mainstreaming activities at the national and international levels, including, where appropriate, a gender perspective in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.
- How to introduce targeted gender-related activities into strategies and programmes on peace and security; for example, increasing the number of women considered for United Nations peacekeeping operations, Secretary-General's Special Representative and Special Envoy positions.
- Establishing the linkages between the activities carried out by the United Nations system and efforts by Member States to implement resolution 1325 (2000), particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- Mobilizing and actively involving civil society in the implementation of the resolution.
- Efficient monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure sustainability of positive changes in the situation and the role of women in conflict and post conflict countries.
- Progress towards greater coherence between national and international implementation of the resolution.

Expected outcome

8. It is anticipated that the debate will help strengthen the growing international awareness of the importance of the role of women in the maintenance of peace and security and in peacebuilding. This should be reflected in a presidential statement summing up the broad and concrete recommendations for enhancing the role of Member States in the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), taking into account national peculiarities.